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Yun Lung, "Bër Wa Dser," probably the oldest term, meaning "People of the White King". None of these names refer to the colour of the skin, for the Min Chia, like the Chinese, are unacquainted with the use of "white" as a descriptive term for one of the races of mankind. To them people of all the races of eastern Asia and of Europe are the same in colour, only Indians (and presumably Negroes if they were ever to see one) being described as "black men". This attitude is not incorrect. Among the light skinned mountain peoples of western China it is not the colour of the skin, but the black hair and Mongolian features of the face which differentiate them from Europeans.

The origin of the use of the term "white" in connection with the Min Chia is not known to the people themselves. Some suggest that it is in fact derived from that mysterious ruler, the "White King", concerning whom there are certain legends. The name, like the current Chinese term for the Shans, "Pai I" meaning "white clothes" may have referred to an earlier fashion for dressing in white. The Min Chia do not now do so, but nor for that matter do the Shans either. In common parlance the imprecision of these names does not matter, for it is not so much race as language which is present as the differentiating factor in the minds of the people—does a man "Speak White" i.e. Min Chia, or "Speak Han" i.e. Chinese. The situation is the exact converse of that found, in say, Wales. Whether a man speaks Welsh or not he is "Welsh", if born of stock long resident in Wales. In Ta Li if a man speaks Min Chia, he is Min Chia, if he does not, he is "Chinese"—even though his mother is well known to be Min Chia both by descent and by language.

The fact, so rare and refreshing to-day as to be almost disturbing to the European, is that here the nationality complex does not exist. People of widely sundered racial origin are not only not differentiated on this basis, but are barely

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563 conscious of this factor as marking them off from their
554 neighbours. Language and education, or the lack of it, are
829 the accepted standards for determining the status of the individual. No political discrimination divides the Chinese settler or official from the natives of the land. If a Min Chia is able to read and write Chinese—as many are—then he is eligible for every post that a Chinese could fill, and this applies also to the less civilised tribes of Yunnan. The "Chinese", so called, resident in Ta Li, apart from a few merchants from Ssu Ch'uan who are recent immigrants, are in fact all partly of Min Chia descent.

The only partial exception to this attitude towards race is found in the case of the Moslem population, a historical curiosity, for this community is descended from the mercenary Central Asiatic soldiery used by the Mongol Emperors in their conquest of Yunnan. The Moslems, still keeping to the essential practices of their religion, form a group apart. They speak no language but Chinese or Min Chia, but they neither intermarry with the non-Moslem population, nor partake of hospitality at a non-Moslem table. Once numerous and powerful, their strength was broken after the failure of the great Moslem rebellion in Yunnan in 1874, when many thousands were slaughtered. To day they form a not unprosperous community mainly engaged in trade and transport, although they also own land and breed stock. For the most part they are "Chinese speakers" although four or five villages of Min Chia speaking Moslems are scattered about on the Ta Li plain. These are certainly of mixed race, the progeny of the original soldier settlers and the women of the country. None the less a physical type persists; aquiline features are quite common among the Moslems of Yunnan.

186 The lack of any strong national feeling among the Min
197 Chia has led many travellers to regard them as an absorbed

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Since the topography of the county is mountainous, the population is not only scanty but poor. With the exception of the Ch'iang villages, their houses are widely scattered and villages far apart, and the roads between are very poor. It is a common experience for one to travel scores of miles through precipitous cliffs or dense forests without seeing anyone.

The population is not only scanty, but the distribution is far from even. According to government estimation, the area of Li-fan is about 11,000 square kilometers, and the total population is around 80,000. The average density of population is then less than 8 persons per square km. But they are not evenly distributed; about 40% of this population is concentrated in the area between Wei-chow and the Hung-chiao or Red Bridge Mountain (紅橋山), where about 30% of the foodstuffs of the county is produced. The cultural landscape is one of the linear pattern along the river. About another 30% of the population is concentrated in the Black River Valley, where about 30% of the total food crops of the county is produced. This leaves only 30% of the population at large roaming over the vast expanse of the grasslands, about 90% of the total area of the county. That means a density of less than 3 persons per square km. Since there is a great deal of mixing up of the tribes' people, their social customs seem to differ more according to geographical environments than by racial inheritance.

C. SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN RELATION TO THE MODE OF LIVING

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First, in regard to clothing. Both men and women of the various tribes wear long gowns. They are made of different materials, according to the resources and demands of their particular environments. For instance, the Ch'iang people wear long gowns made of hemp; the Gia-rung and Black River people, living in comparatively high ground, wear long gowns made of yak's wool; while the Fan people, in the grasslands, wear long gowns of yak's wool or fur. There is very little difference between a man's gown and a women's because both men and women have the same style, and both like to trim their gowns with a touch of red, or to use a red belt or belts of some other brilliant colors. All of them, both men and women, usually have only one gown, which is worn year after year, and not until it almost turns into threads is a new one made to take its place. The style itself is really a relic of the Tsing dynasty, which reflects little of their climatic and geographical environment, but rather reflects their history and social inheritance. Their headdresses are different. Both men and women of the Ch'iang people wrap their heads with a piece of cloth, like the Szechwan people in the plains, probably for the same reason, as a protection against the weather. But among the Gia-rung people the women put a folded cloth on the top of their heads, which they use as a mat when they go to worship in the temples. The Fan women usually do not wear anything, but their hair is most elaborately combed and richly decorated with silver and coral, because in their nomadic way of living a women's headdress denotes her bank.

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